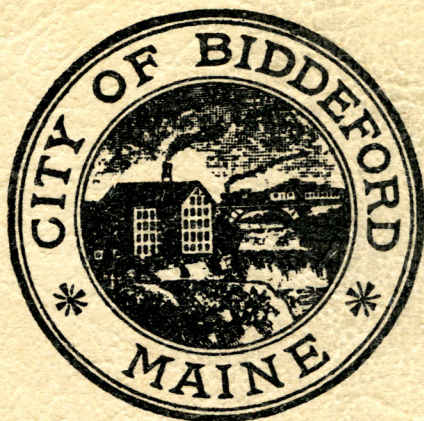


**SOUVENIR
OF
BIDDEFORD
MAINE
CENTENNIAL**



1855 - 1955

First Century Under City Charter

**July 29 - 30 - 31
1955**

Biddeford in Pictures
Past and Present

1855 — 1955

*Published by the City of Biddeford
on the 100th Anniversary
of its City Charter*

Brief Autobiography of LOUIS B. LAUSIER

Born in the City of Biddeford, November 17, 1879. He attended the public and parochial schools of Biddeford and graduated with honors in 1898 from Ste. Anne de la Pocatiere College in Canada.

Undertaking the study of law he was admitted to the Maine Bar in 1906 and has been an active practitioner in his profession since that time.

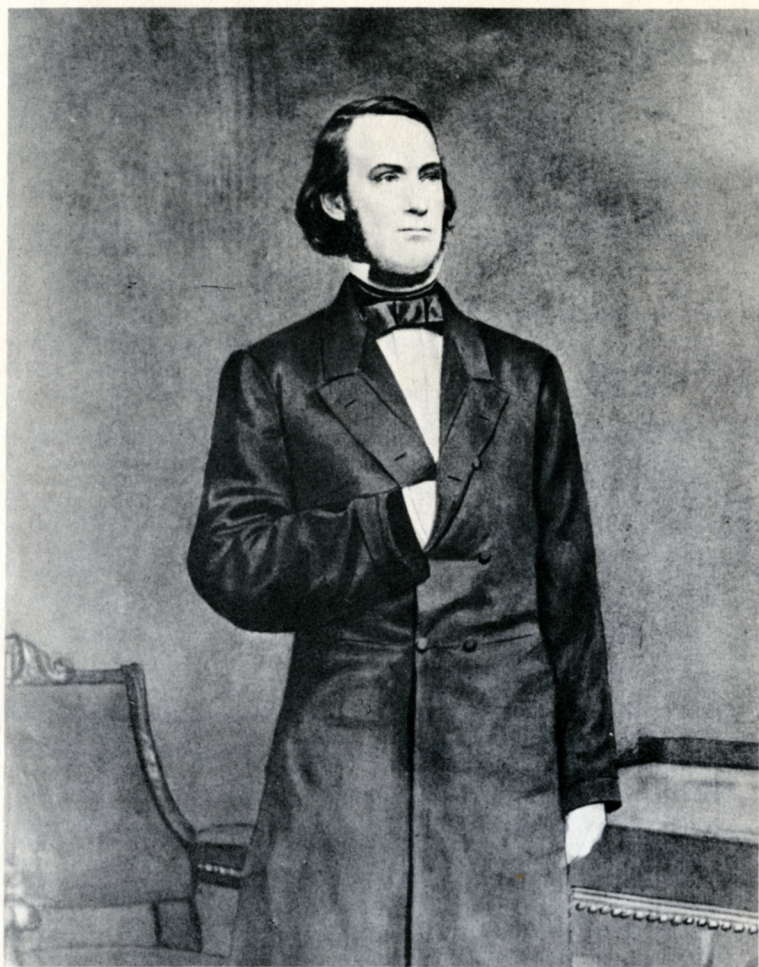
He is a member of the American Bar Association and the State Bar Association: president of the Pepperell Trust Company; a life member of the Portland Lodge of Elks, member of the Red Men, Variety Club and several other fraternal organizations. A communicant of St. Joseph's Parish, Roman Catholic.

He always engaged actively in the public affairs of his native City and has served as Alderman, Auditor, City Solicitor, Representative to the Legislature, Judge of the Municipal Court, and is now serving his 15th consecutive term as Mayor of Biddeford.



LOUIS B. LAUSIER

Biddeford's forty-third Mayor. Serving continuously since 1941, he has closed Biddeford's first century as a city.



DANIEL E. SOMES

Biddeford's first Mayor. Elected
on March 10, 1855, he opened
Biddeford's first century
as a city.



Central Block

In 1855 this was the largest commercial building in Biddeford and York County. Built in 1849 it stood on the site of the present City Building. It was built of wood, three stories in height, and its top floor held two halls of which the larger (Central Hall) could seat 1,500 people. In this hall Biddeford's last town election was held on Saturday, February 10, 1855, when the voters of Biddeford accepted the City Charter that had been granted by the Maine Legislature and signed by the Governor on February 1st, 1855.

The curved front of Central Block matched the similar curved front of the Biddeford House (now the Hotel Thacher) across Adams Street. The purpose of those curving fronts and sidewalks was to form a market "square" for farmers and farm wagons coming in to sell farm products. Diagonally across Main Street, near the present Pepperell Athletic Club Hall, was Biddeford's famous Hay Scales, a noted town landmark, where farmers weighed their loads of hay.

Three years after Biddeford became a city, Central Block was totally destroyed by fire on March 2, 1858. It was a famous blaze.



The First City Building

Although Biddeford had been settled in 1630 and had been incorporated as a town about 1653, it still did not possess a building to house its town officers and activities during more than 200 years. When Biddeford became a city, in 1855, it still had to rent offices for five years. In July, 1859, the City bought the land where the Central Block had stood and a year later, on July 4th, 1860, the cornerstone of the first City Building was laid with Masonic ceremonies. The building was of brick, three stories high, and its third floor was a large auditorium known as City Hall, used for lectures and plays. City Hall was dedicated by an Odd Fellows Festival on November 7, 1860, in the same week that Abraham Lincoln was first elected President of the United States.



City Building, 1955

The first City Building was destroyed by fire on the night of December 30, 1894. The present building was erected in 1895, with its main entrance on Adams Street under the small second floor balcony shown in this picture.



View of Biddeford, England, showing its location on the Torridge River about 5 miles from the river's mouth.



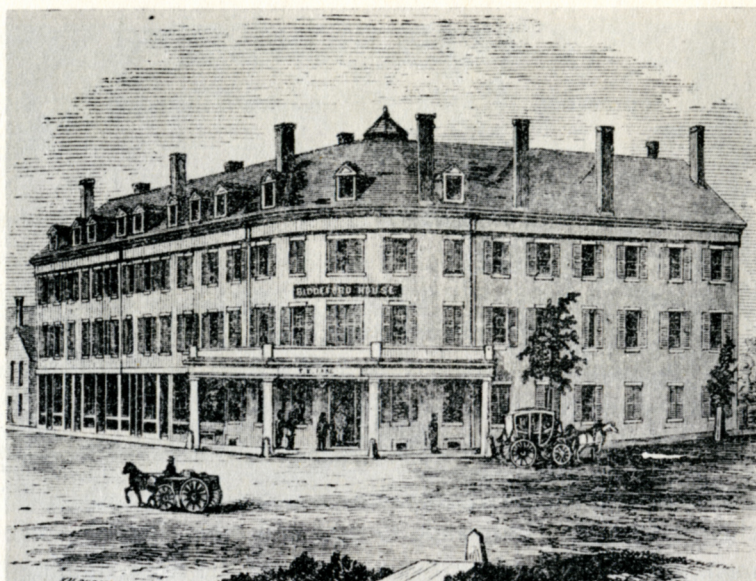
View of Biddeford, Maine, in 1870, showing its location on the Saco River and the resemblance to the English Biddeford's location.

The Names of Biddeford

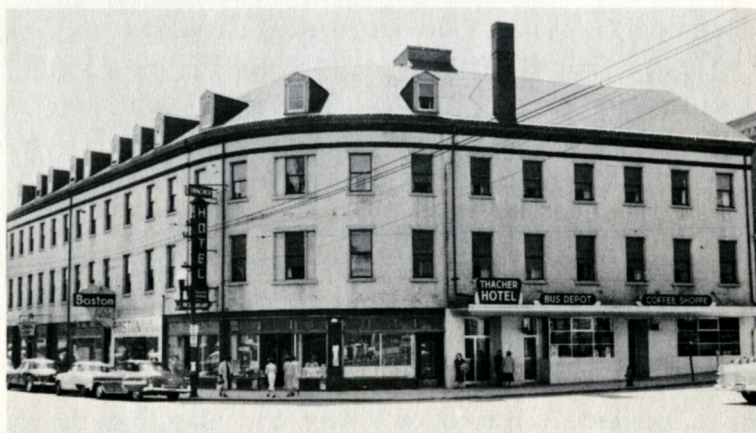
In September, 1616, Captain Richard Vines, born on the west coast of England not far from the old town of Bideford, anchored his small ship near the present Biddeford Pool. He had been sent with 32 men by Sir Ferdinando Gorges, the English proprietor of Maine, to test our winter climate. Six months later, Captain Vines sailed back to England, having proved what was previously doubted in England — namely, that white men could live comfortably through a Maine winter. Captain Vines and his crew were our first winter visitors.

Fourteen years later, on June 25, 1630, Captain Vines returned and began the first permanent settlement here. His charter, from Sir Ferdinando Gorges and other English noblemen, gave Vines land on the west side of the river, running 8 miles inland and 4 miles along the coast toward Cape Porpoise. This tract was described as being part of a larger tract extending from Cape Porpoise to Cape Elizabeth and called (in the charter) Swackadocke — an attempt to render in English the Indian name of the river. Samuel Champlain, the French explorer, had tried to put that same Indian name into French some 25 years earlier, and had spelled it Choüacoet. Present day students of old Indian languages believe that the long Indian name meant "the river with the sandbar at the mouth." The name of Choüacoet or Swackadocke was soon shortened to Sawco, Sacoe and Saco, but Captain Vines called his first settlement Winter Harbor, from his earlier winter visit of 1616.

In 1718 the whole section known as Swackadocke in 1630 was renamed Biddeford, and until 1762 the name Biddeford applied to all land on both sides of the river, from Kennebunkport to Scarborough. The name was taken from the English town from which some early settlers had come. The similarity in location (each town on a river, five miles from the sea) had something to do with the naming. The name Biddeford has now been in continuous use for 237 years.

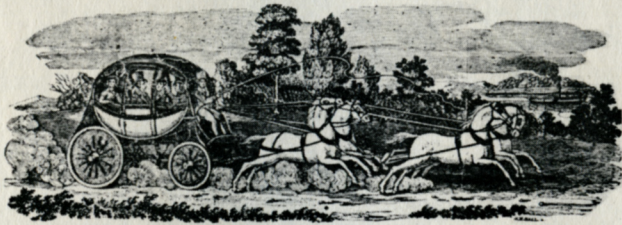


Biddeford House, 1855



Hotel Thacher, 1955

FOR THE CAMP MEETING



The Messrs. Gowen, during
the next week, to accommodate our citizens who may
wish to attend the Camp Meeting at Kennebunk, will
run Coaches

Three times a Day

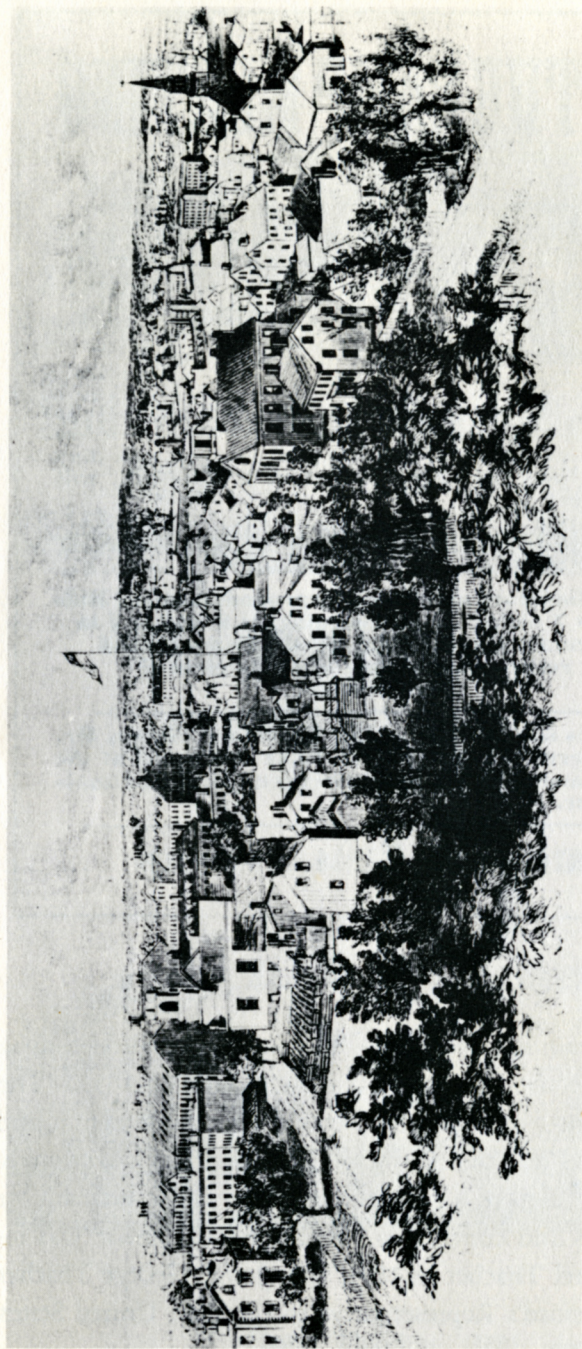
Between Biddeford and the Camp ground; Leaving Bid-
deford at 7 o'clock in the morning, at 1 and at 7 in
the evening; Coaches leaving the Camp ground
for return immediately after the close of
each service.

Names may be left at the Biddeford House, Dr.
Robie's, Berry & Jellison's, Dr. Luke Hill's, and at the
house of Samuel Tripp, and passengers will be prompt-
ly called for.

Fare,----25 Cents each way.

Stagecoach Advertisement, 1855

The first railroad built from Boston reached Biddeford in 1842, but stagecoach travel was still common in 1855. The Biddeford House, built in 1847, was a stagecoach center and the largest hotel in York County. The front portico, strongly built, was long used as a speaker's platform and bandstand for outdoor rallies and concerts. The Biddeford House was renamed the Hotel Thacher in 1894, after Judge George Thacher who was Biddeford's Representative to the First United States Congress in 1789.

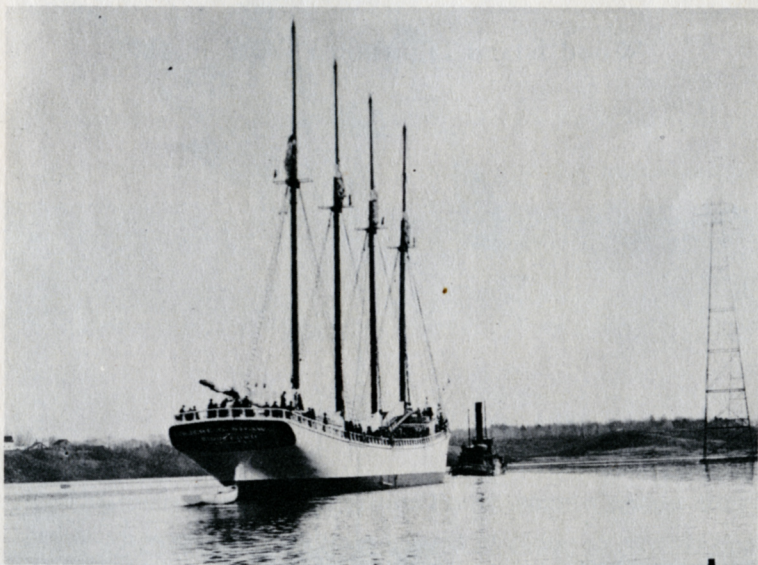


View of Biddeford in 1856

Shows Adams and Washington Streets as seen from near the present Good Shepherd's Convent. The Washington Street school is at the right. It was then Biddeford's first High School.



The Biddeford Shipyard and the Covered Bridge, 1854



The Jere G. Shaw, 1918

This four-masted schooner was the last vessel built in the Biddeford shipyard.



Wood Island Lighthouse, built in 1808



Stage Island and Winter Harbor anchorage



Mouth of the Saco River, 1880

This picture shows Leighton Point where Captain Vines and his colonists built the first houses in 1630. It reveals how Wood Island and Stage Island form the safe anchorage that made Captain Vines call it Winter Harbor. Stage Island was named from the stages, or rough wooden racks, on which the early settlers sun-dried fish for export to the West Indies. The 60-foot stone tower on Stage Island is not a monument but a government navigation marker built in 1825.



The Oldest House In Biddeford

This house was built by Captain Samuel Jordan around 1715. As a boy he had been a prisoner of the Indians and had learned the Indian language. As a man he was an interpreter, an Indian trader, and such an expert marksman that the Indians were careful not to attack him. He built a strong stone wall around his house and only admitted Indians he knew to be friendly and trusted. With these Indians he traded, buying their deerskins, their beaverskins and snowshoes, in exchange for the "store goods" he stocked. At one time his store was said to be the only one between Boston and the Kennebec River.

But Captain Jordan's Biddeford neighbors were not easy over the way his trading post drew the Indians, and their complaints resulted in a new trading post and fort being built about 1730, some 10 miles upriver in what is now Dayton.

This old house has been a fort, a trading post, and a garrison house, as well as a home for almost two centuries and a half.

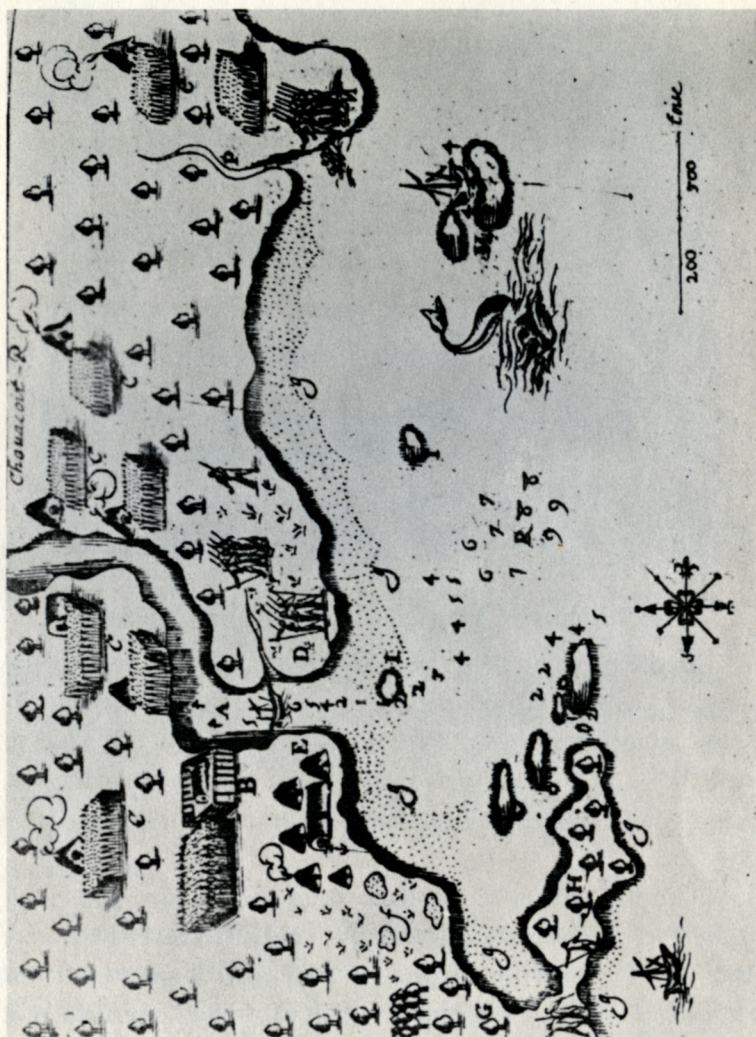


The Biddeford Flag In The National Museum

In the War of 1812, the old house on page 16 was the home of Captain Waldo Hill, and used as a garrison house for Maine soldiers after the British warship raided the Pool in June, 1814. This flag, homemade by the women of Biddeford, flew proudly over the house and, later, over Captain Hill's ship.

The flag, seven feet square, is made of cloth woven by hand, dyed by hand, and sewed by hand. Because there were then only 15 States the flag has 15 stars and 15 stripes. It was a similar 15-striped flag that Francis Scott Key watched that same year of 1814 in Baltimore, Maryland, while he wrote "The Star Spangled Banner."

Biddeford's old flag is now preserved in the National Museum of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C.



Samuel Champlain's Map of 1605

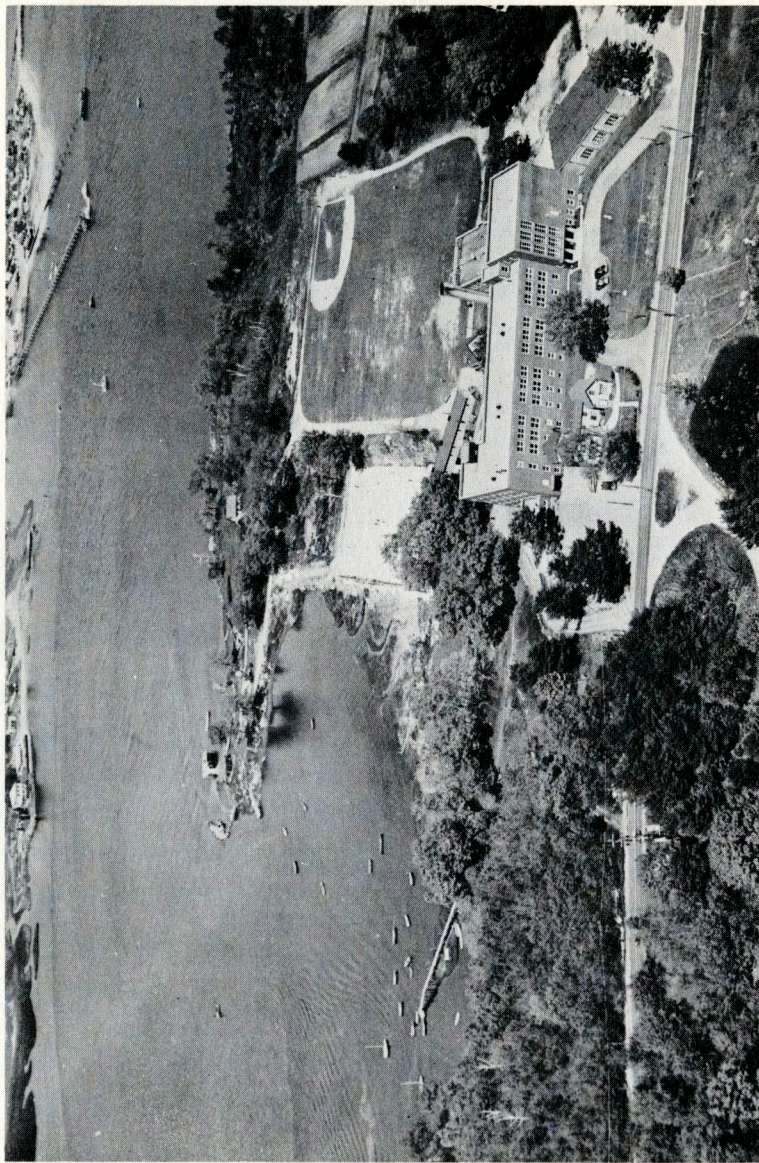
The First Map of Biddeford

The first white man known to have come here was Captain Martin Pring, born near Bideford, England, who sailed up the river to the Falls, found Indian camps but saw no Indians, and sailed away again without making any map of the river. That was in May, 1603, and Captain Pring was 23 years old.

The second white man, who came two years later, was the explorer and geographer, Samuel Champlain, born near the city of Rochefort, France. Champlain was 38 years old when he sailed here with the De Monts expedition.

Champlain and his mates spent about four days here, arriving on July 9, 1605, and leaving on July 12. During the day they explored the river, and met with the Indians, but at night they slept on their small ship anchored out in the bay. From the ship's deck, Champlain drew the freehand map shown on page 18, that shows the country as it then looked, from Biddeford Pool to Pine Point and Scarborough. On shore he was especially interested in the Indian corn fields which were the first he had seen in the New World. He wrote a careful description of how the local Indians planted and cultivated their corn, and the beans, squashes, pumpkins and tobacco that they also grew.

Champlain was the first man to make a map of this section. He was also the first man whose written description of what he saw here, has survived. His story of his four-day visit in 1605 is one of the most valuable early documents in Biddeford history.



St. Francis College, Pool Road

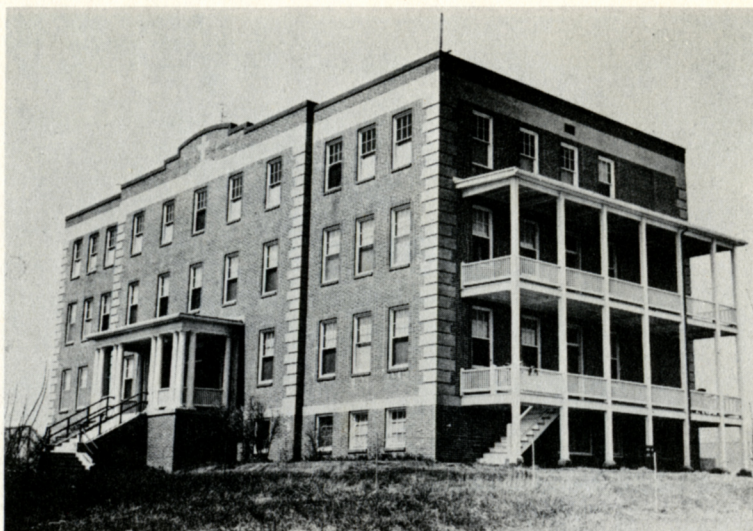


Stella Maris Boarding School



Judge Rishworth Jordan House

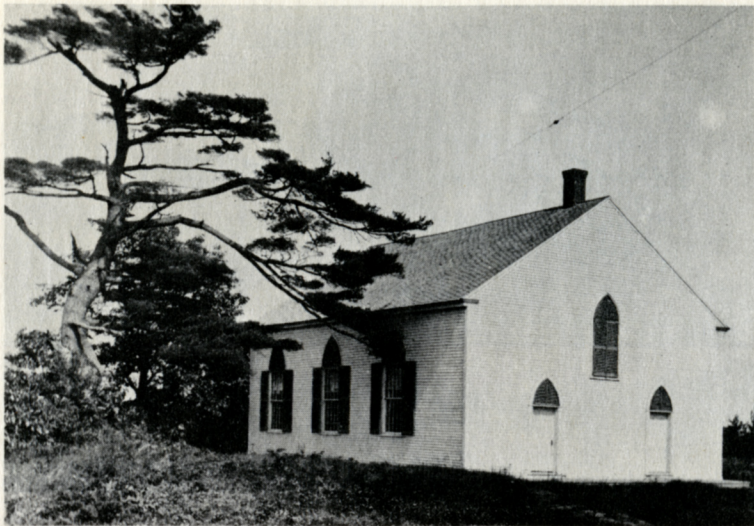
Dated from 1740. Remodelled into the
Stella Maris School in 1931.



St. Andre Home, Pool Road



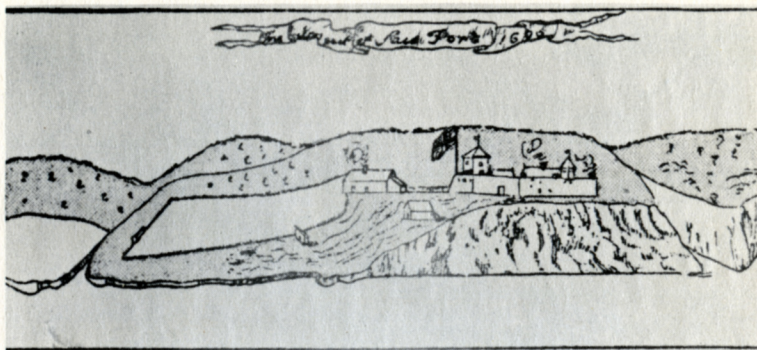
Notre Dame Hospital, Pool Road



First Parish Church, Pool Road

For more than 150 years there was only one church in Biddeford. It was the town church, supported by taxes as was then the custom in New England. Thus the early church sites of Biddeford followed the growth of the town back from near the sea where settlement had begun in 1630. By 1750 the center of population was around the present intersection of Pool Road and Guinea Road, and accordingly a new town church was built on this site, being finished in 1759.

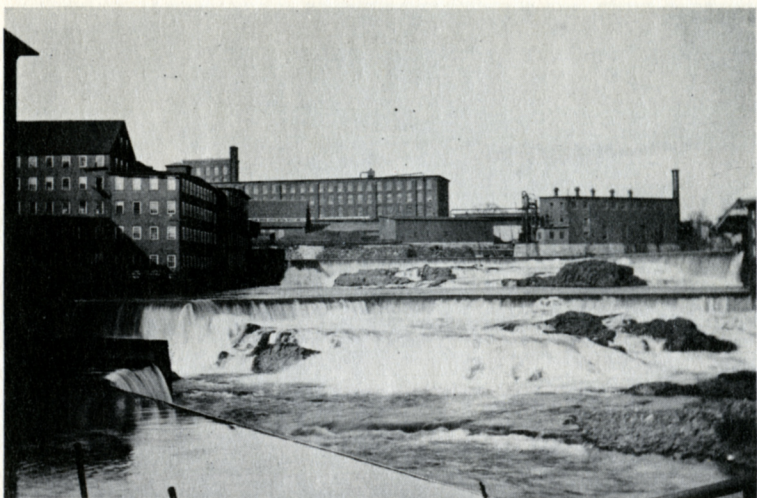
In 1797 the town split into two parishes, and this church then served only the population from West Brook to the Pool. The church building was originally much taller, with a steeple, but the smaller congregation found it too large to maintain. In 1840 the church was cut down in size, and remodelled into its present form. It stands on the oldest church site in Biddeford.



The Stone Fort and River Bank, 1699



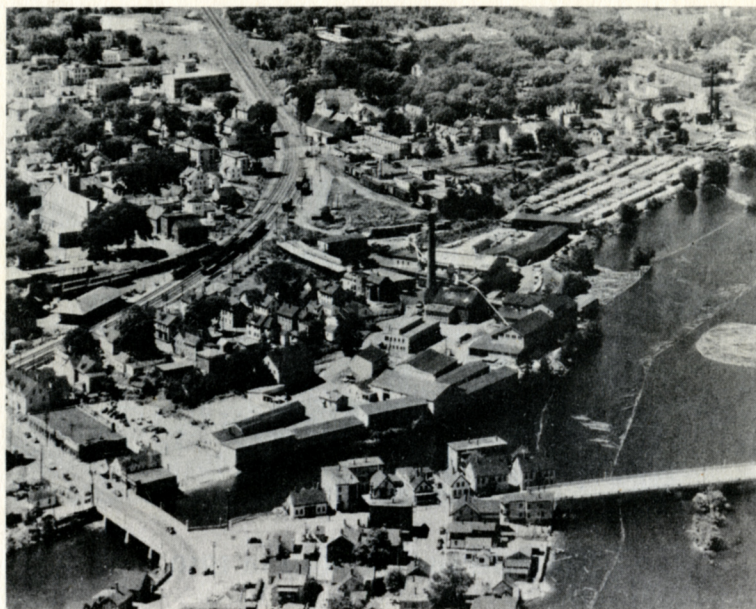
The Falls and the Freshet of 1829



The Falls and the Mills in 1910

The pictures on these two pages center around the Falls of the river, between Indian Island (now Factory Island) and Biddeford. When the stone fort was built on the river bank, about opposite Emery Street, it was purely as a protection against Indian raids. The only industries were a few small sawmills powered by water wheels. By 1829 when the next picture was painted, there were more sawmills but they were still small and very little of the river's immense power was used. In fact in the next year all of that magnificent water-power was sold for less than ten thousand dollars. A century later, that same waterpower was sold for more than two million dollars.

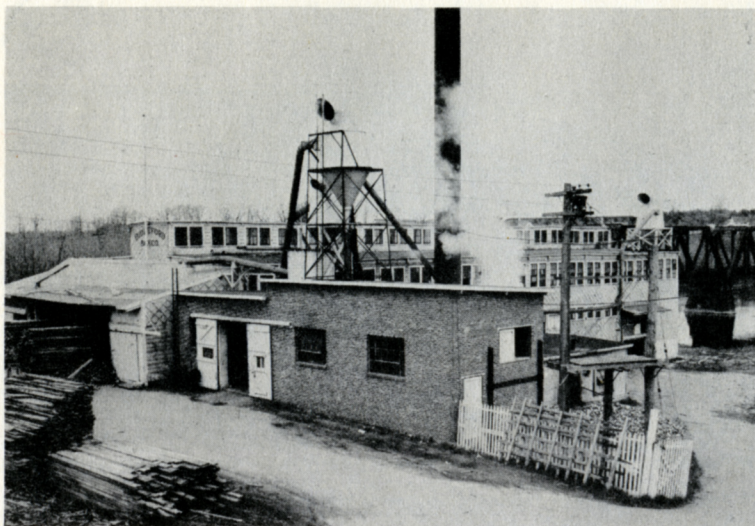
From the beginning of the Falls to their end near lower Main Street Bridge, the river drops almost 40 feet. That power began to be developed in Biddeford in 1839, and the first cotton mill began operation in 1845. Five years later, in 1850, Biddeford had grown to be the largest town in York County. In 1855, ten years after the cotton mills began, Biddeford became York County's first city.



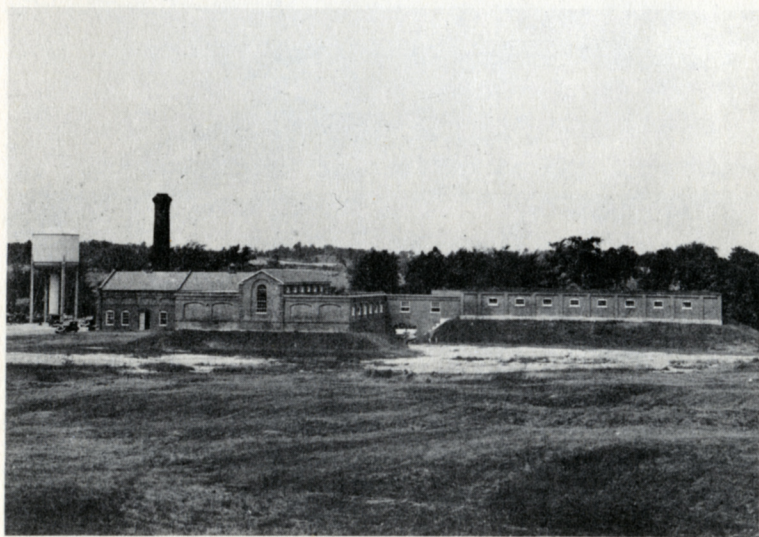
Diamond Match Company, 1950

This air view, looking west from Spring's Island, shows the plant of the Diamond Match Company lying along the Biddeford riverbank above Elm Street. In the upper right-hand corner the Biddeford Box Company plant can also be seen. The plant of J. G. Deering and Son is nearby on Spring's Island though not shown in the picture. Biddeford's lumber industry has been concentrated in this section for more than a century.

The lumber industry is the oldest industry in Biddeford, the first sawmill having been built lower down the river 300 years ago. The abundant lumber from the forests upriver supplied the early mills, and in this air view a circular cluster of logs can be seen waiting above the boom for sawing. The lumber plants here have given the Saco River the distinction of being the oldest river in the United States, from the standpoint of continuous lumbering.



Biddeford Box Company



Biddeford and Saco Water Company



New England Telephone Company



Biddeford Post Office



Main Station, Biddeford Fire Department

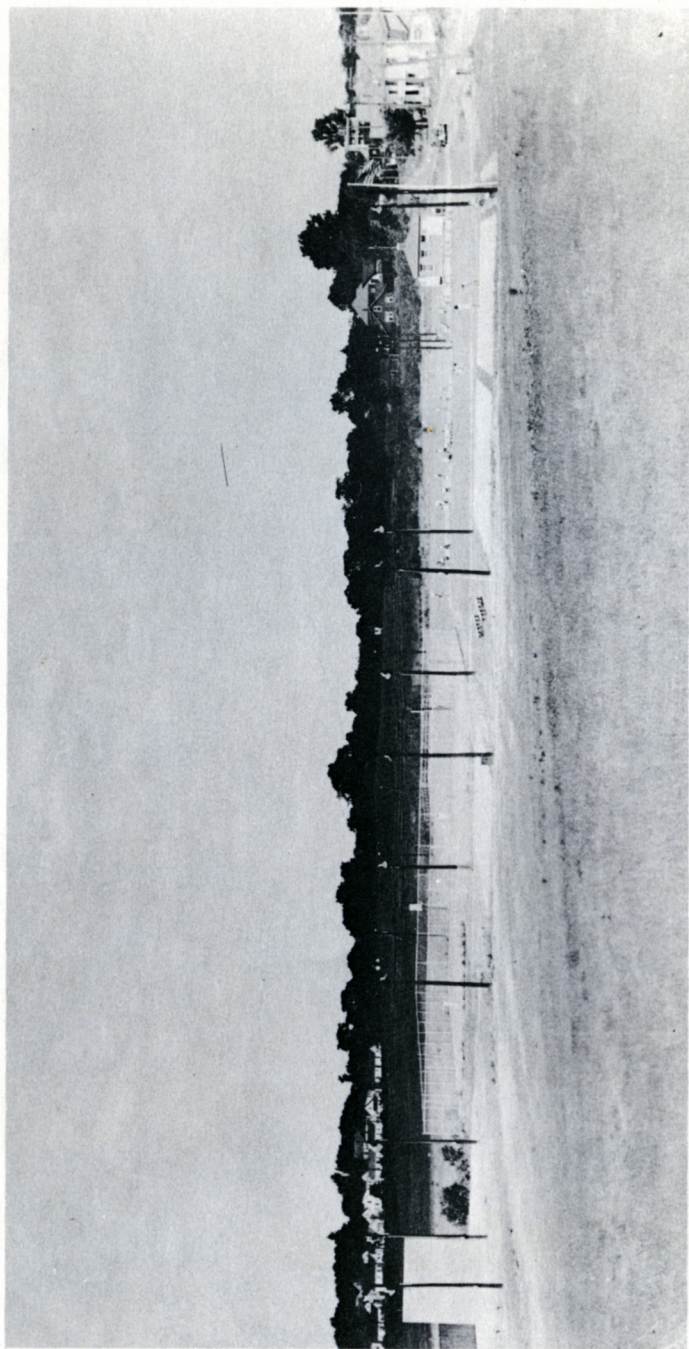


Washington Street, looking toward Main



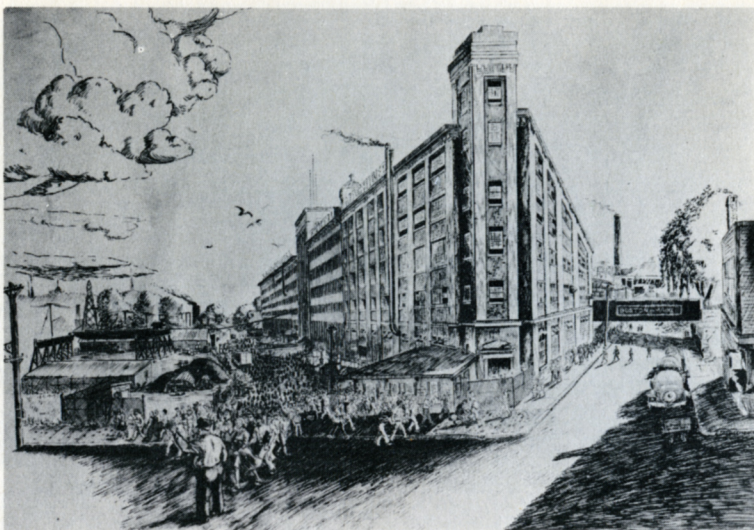


Biddeford, as seen from an airplane over Saco.



Memorial Field, May Street

Built in 1947 as public recreation ground, and as a living memorial
to Biddeford's veterans of all the Nation's wars.



Pen and ink sketch of Saco Lowell Shops



The Pepperell Mills, as seen from Factory Island.



Industrial Plant of the Biddeford Improvement
Company, Western Avenue.



Industrial Plant of the Biddeford Building
Association, State Street.



St. John's Building, Main Street



Union St. John Building, Jefferson Street



Second Congregational Church, Crescent Street

The second oldest church site in Biddeford, a meeting house having been built here in 1796. At that time the main road from Boston ran in front of this site, along what is now Crescent Street. The present building dates from 1850, having been extensively remodelled in 1870.



United Baptist Church, Jefferson Street

The original church structure, built in 1796, was moved here from Crescent Street in 1850. It was heavily remodelled in 1899.



Methodist Episcopal Church,
Foss Street



**Hellenic Orthodox Church of Saint Demetrios,
Adams Street**

Built in 1855 as a Baptist church. Occupied by the Greek congregation since 1937.



St. Mary's Church, St. Mary's Street

Originally known as the Church of the Assumption and the first church building was erected on this site in 1856. Present building was begun in 1923 and dedicated in 1926.



St. Joseph's Church, Elm Street

Parish organized in 1870. Building begun in 1873 and in use since October, 1874.



St. Andre's Church, Bacon Street

Parish organized 1899. Building begun in 1900 and dedicated in 1910.



First Universalist Church, City Square

Built in 1867. Steeple lowered because of hurricane damage of 1954.



Advent Christian Church, Hill Street

Built in 1867, and extensively rebuilt in 1896.



Congregation Etz Chaim, Bacon Street

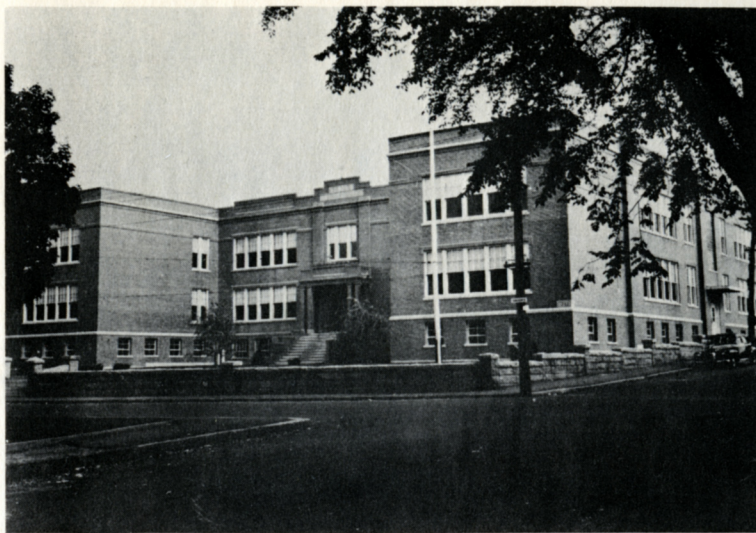
Congregation organized in 1892, and has occupied this building since 1906. Building erected in 1874.



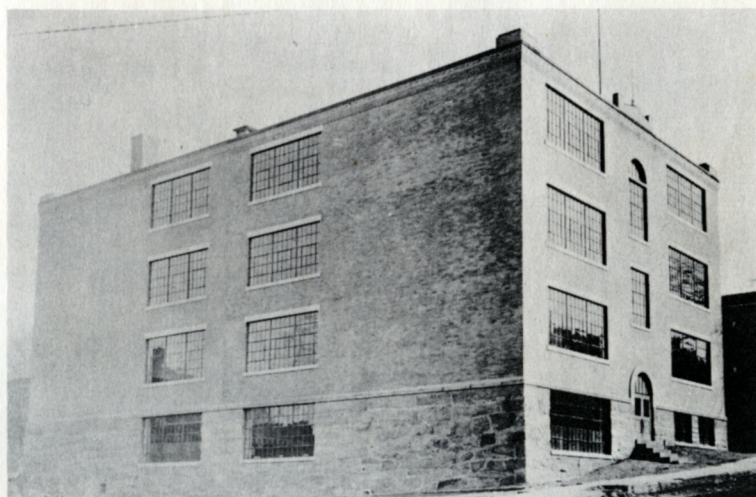
Christ Episcopal Church, Crescent Street
Congregation organized in 1869. This building built in 1906.



Marie-Joseph Academy, Biddeford Pool

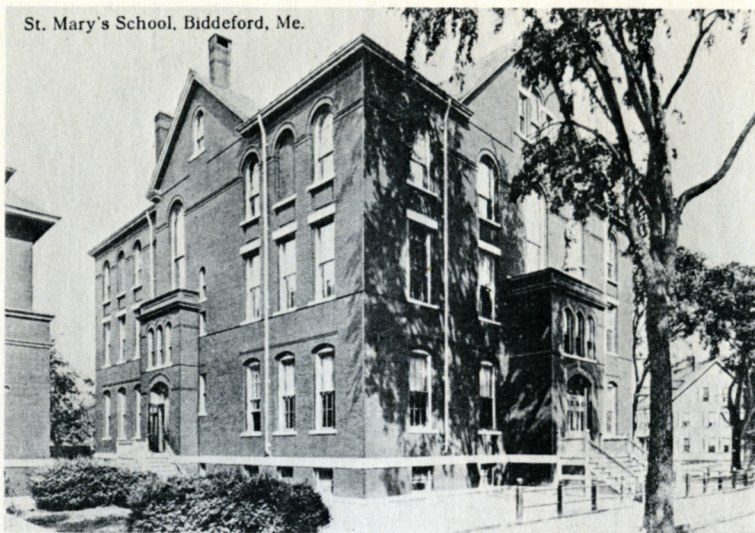


St. Louis High School

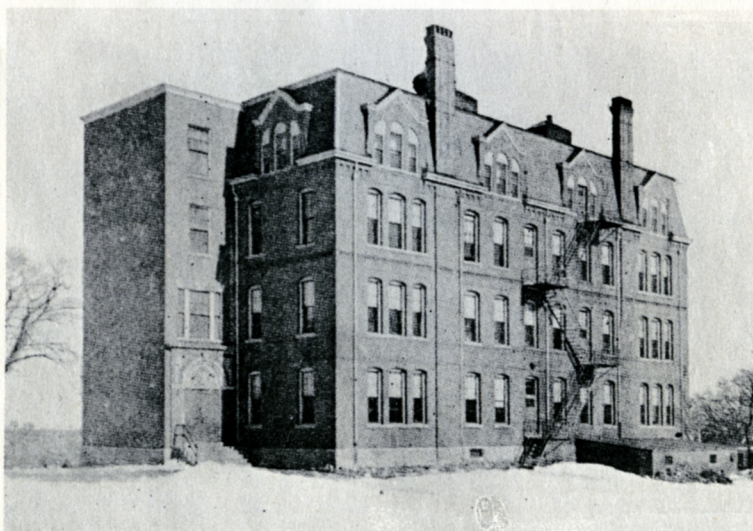


St. Andre's School

St. Mary's School, Biddeford, Me.



St. Mary's School



St. Joseph's School



Biddeford High School



Washington Street School



Thomas H. Emery School



Bradbury Street School



Birch Street School



Wentworth Street School



McArthur Public Library

Library founded in 1863 as result of gift of book-collection of 3,000 volumes begun in 1841. Building built in 1863 as the Pavilion Church. Has been occupied by the Library since 1902.



Webber Hospital



Trull Hospital



Odd Fellows Block, Alfred Street



Central Theatre, Alfred Street



Masonic Block, Main Street



Main Street, west from Adams



Main Street, east from Washington



Biddeford Savings Bank



Pepperell Trust Company



First National Bank



York County Savings Bank



City Theatre, interior

RENY BROS., PRINTERS
SACO, MAINE

